

16 November 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: MIG-23s

1. On Monday night when the State Department learned that the Evans and Novack column on MIG-23s was to appear the following day Vance asked that Dobrynin be brought in as quickly as possible (presumably this was so that we could make our points to the Soviets before the Evans and Novack column appeared in print.

2. The talking points that had been prepared at State the previous day (reported in my previous MIG-23 memorandum) had been revised at the White House. Vance, however, had not yet received a copy of the revised talking points so while Dobrynin was waiting to see Vance Shulman checked out the NSC revisions to the talking points with Aaron and communicated them to the Secretary.

3. The texts of Vance's talking points have been transmitted in a NODIS cable to Moscow and Havana. To my knowledge the original version was modified to avoid saying that we ~~did~~ ^{also} consider the presence of one or two ground attack MIGs as acceptable; to attenuate the linkage to SALT; also it was stated that we had some evidence of the possible presence of MIG-23 BNs or 27s in Cuba not MIG-23 BNs and 27s as indicated earlier.

4. Off the record Vance added to the talking points (and this does not appear in the NODIS cable a strong expression of our concern about the possible presence of ground attack aircraft which we regarded as offensive. The talking points presumably do not convey to the Soviets that we are at

this point demanding that they withdraw anything but seemed designed to alert them to a potential serious issue which it is in the mutual interest of the two sides to avert by prompt attention.

5. In the press guidance prepared yesterday the State Department spokesman was instructed not to acknowledge that we have communicated to the Soviets on this issue presumably to avoid stimulating rumors of a confrontation environment.

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